

Leon County's Community Garden Program

Community gardens provide nutrition, physical activity, community engagement, safety, and economic vitality for a neighborhood and its residents. Leon County's Commissioners recently adopted a formal policy to support community gardens, building on a series of prior actions supporting gardening, including pilot gardens. The Policy applies to two types of gardens:



I. COMMUNITY GARDENS: Gardens created on County property, which are operated and maintained by citizens, to grow food for use by participating gardeners.

II. STAKEHOLDER GARDENS: Gardens established and operated on private property for which Leon County provides ancillary support. These gardens are for civic purposes including education, response to food security deficits in neighborhoods, revitalization, and/or neighborhood beautification.

The County program provides three kinds of assistance: 1) a **grant program** for financial assistance; 2) **material assistance** that includes mulch, compost bins, and rain barrels; and, 3) in conjunction with Leon County Cooperative Extension, **technical consultation** to promote food-growing success and adoption of sustainable gardening practices. Citizens who wish to apply begin by filling out an application. These applications are available on-line at www.GrowingGreen.org.



Fort Braden Community Garden

I. COMMUNITY GARDENS

These gardens are for citizens who wish to create gardens on County property. To be approved, these gardens must be operated and maintained by an organized group of a minimum of eight citizens who are Leon County residents. The food grown shall be for use by participating gardeners or distribution to non-profit entities and shall not be sold.

The garden should enhance the usefulness of the property to the public and improve neighborhood vitality. Sites must be approved by the County to ensure that they are free of land-use conflicts, environmental, or safety concerns. Gardens must be properly maintained or the County shall revoke permission to individuals or groups to continue gardening on the County property.

Steps in Community Garden Application Process

1. Submission of the completed packet requires obtaining pledges of commitment from a total of 8 gardeners.
2. Upon receipt of the package, the County coordinates review with affected internal departments regarding site suitability and other considerations as stated in the application.
3. The applicant will be notified of approval or denial of the application. If the application is denied, the reasons will be stated. If County assistance is requested, applicants will be notified of the type(s) and amount of money granted. Funding is limited to **\$500** for these gardens.
4. All gardeners must enter into an agreement of participation with the County that consists of signing a waiver of liability and applying for a Special Restricted-Use Permit.
5. Garden organizers are encouraged to hold an orientation session for gardeners, in conjunction with a consultation with Cooperative Extension.
6. Construction on the garden will begin upon approval by the Office of Sustainability in consultation with County departments

County material support may include:

- Soil amendments (coarse and fine mulch), available from Solid Waste
- Rain barrels and/or compost bins, available from Solid Waste/Recycling
- Assistance from Public Works in installation of fencing or water supply/plumbing

Grant Funds can support:

In addition, gardeners may apply for a grant not to exceed \$500, contingent upon the availability of funds, to pay for:

- Enhancement of water supply
- Fencing materials
- Lumber and other materials for construction of garden beds (green, pressure-treated wood, concrete blocks, or other non-toxic materials)
- Purchase of soil amendments such as topsoil or mushroom compost



Second Harvest Food Bank Garden

II. STAKEHOLDER GARDENS (for civic purposes on private property)

Stakeholder gardens include gardens at schools, places of worship, and gardens associated with not-for-profit organizations including food banks and homeless shelters, neighborhood associations, or other non-commercial institutions and entities. Such gardens, whose purposes are for civic improvement including education, growing fresh produces to relieve hunger, or neighborhood revitalization, are eligible to apply for County support. The garden must be within Leon County.

The County's role is to provide limited support by way of grants and/or in-kind services to support eligible stakeholder gardens. Applicants need to fill in requested information on this package. The package will be reviewed by County staff for compliance with Leon County's Community Garden Policy. Grants are limited to a maximum of **\$1,000**, based on availability of funds.

Grant Funds for these can support:

In addition, gardeners may apply for a grant not to exceed \$1,000, contingent upon the availability of funds, to pay for:

- Fencing
- Purchase of lumber and materials for construction of garden beds (green, pressure-treated wood, concrete blocks, or other non-toxic materials)
- Purchase of topsoil or mushroom compost
- Purchase of seeds
- Purchase of garden tools, gloves, scales, or other non-mechanical equipment.
- Enhancement of water supply.